

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSIONAL CAREER OF THE STAFF OF PROVIDERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE POLISH ARMED FORCES

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to indicate the importance of the role of leadership in the professional career of the commanding staff of officers of the Polish Armed Forces in ensuring security. Thus, the research problem refers to the question of what is the role of leadership in the professional career of the commanding staff of officers of the Polish Armed Forces? The publication is a continuation of a series of articles titled "Social competence of the commanding staff of officers of the Polish Armed Forces in the military security system of Poland" and "The role of the professional environment in shaping social competences". Leadership in today's human resources management in strategic terms is the basic determinant of creating specific behaviours of employees in every organisation. The analysis in the conducted research process refers to many components of social competence of officers who perform command functions. However, for the purposes of this article, leadership has been characterised and described as one of the many components of social competence of officers commanders.

Keywords: leadership, social competences, human resources.

Introduction

Everyone, without exception, is influenced and influenced by others, often without realising it. No one can be completely free from the function of a leader. In every situation or group, there is a person who exerts more influence than others. In another group, he in turn succumbs to the leadership of other people. It is not difficult to identify the distinguished group leader. All you need to do is observe the behaviour of who has the dominant role in the group. It's not

about influencing you, we always do it. It is important what they are and whether we develop our leadership skills.

People very often use concepts related to leadership, but unfortunately only few understand what they are. Many want to lead, but few can do it. The basic problem lies in the fact that most people incorrectly define this concept, identifying it with the function and social position and not the ability to acquire supporters and the ability to influence others. Therefore, we often observe the struggle for positions, positions, titles, after which achieving the illusion of leadership, because not everyone is able to develop their leadership skills, often frustrated by the lack of supporters cease to see themselves as leaders.

This issue is so interesting and inspiring that it has become an incentive to take up this topic. The aim of this publication is to present leadership as one of the leading social competences of the commanding staff of the Polish Armed Forces.

1. The essence of leadership

Leadership is the ability to influence the behavior of a group in order to achieve the intended goal (Kozłowski, Piotrowski, 2005) – says B. Bass. And this expresses the belief that the leader is a great man. A great spirit, mind, authority. Such figures as Napoleon or Alexander the Great were able to shape reality in accordance with their will. The economic power of many countries, and in them certain enterprises, is connected with the vision brought by the great leaders (Stevenson, Jarillo, 1990). Bill Gates and Jack Welch certainly pass today.

In turn, D. Golman, R. Boyatzis and A. McKee believe that the great format leadership is based on emotions (Golman, Boyatzis, McKee, 2002).

Ralph Stogdill believes that there is no one precise definition of a leader (Stevenson, Jarillo, 1990). Leadership can be defined as the process of guiding and influencing the activities of group members related to its tasks (Stevenson, Jarillo, 1990). Four conclusions follow from this definition:

1. leadership assumes entering into relationships and relationships with other people (the leader must have subordinates, whom he will manage, and if they respect and value him, this further strengthens his leadership power);
2. leadership involves the process of unequal division of power in the enterprise. Members of the group have much less power, but they are not completely deprived of it;
3. the leader must skilfully use his power in order to exert real influence on people;
4. leadership is associated with a particular value system. The leader should never forget about the moral aspects of power (Stevenson, Jarillo, 1990).

It should be clearly emphasised that the term leader can not be used interchangeably with manager. This second concept only means the person managing the labour resources, while the

leader has the ability to influence the company's personal resources (Bańka, 1999). The leader sets far-reaching goals and motivates people to act.

Experts in leadership consider that a good leader has a set of specific features that predispose him to a given position as a leader.

R. Goffee and G. Jones direct the reader to the social phenomenon in the aspect of the lack of acceptance of the ideal leader. They believe that a leader with many advantages will not always be accepted by the environment in which he is supposed to lead. In their opinion, the leader for whom people want to go must have additional qualities (Goffee, Jones, 2003).

It does not seem that a leader could be born, as traits that indicate a leadership personality are acquired in the course of life and professional activity (Stoner, Freeman, Gilbert, 1999). Research conducted among people who are leaders and they are not aimed at diversifying the catalog of features determining being a leader. It turned out that there are no strictly distinguishing features of the leaders. They are, for example, enterprising, and they are extroverted, but many other non-leaders also have these features (Stoner, Freeman, Gilbert, 1999).

It has also been proven that leadership largely shapes the personality of a person, not the other way round. The personality traits of leaders evolve, so in the process of acting. It is also indicated that certain features typical of leadership personalities can only have a cultural character, and in the near future, they will evolve so much that they will no longer be distinctive features of leaders.

Relatively few studies concern the comparison of the characteristics of effective and ineffective leaders. In one of the studies carried out by J.A. Stoner, it was found that such features as intelligence, initiative and self-confidence are associated with high leadership functions and high effectiveness in their performance (Stoner, Freeman, Gilbert, 1999).

Research conducted by scientists in Massachusetts and Ohio prove that leadership is not dependent on a set of specific personality traits, but on the degree of coping with specific situations and the ability to use effective and constructive supervision over subordinates (Stoner, Freeman, Gilbert, 1999).

One of the first researchers in the subject of leadership was Max Weber. He is the creator of the term legitimate authority, which, according to him, is an attribute of every leader, because it provides the opportunity to influence the attitudes of other people (Kurnal, 1972). Weber distinguished three ideal types of legally established power. They are (Kurnal, 1972):

1. charismatic power – assuming that people see special, extraordinary attributes in leaders;
2. traditional authority – indicating the belief in the durability of the established organisation order;
3. rational (legal) power – this is the power that comes from choice or appointment and is based on the legality of legal forms.

According to Max Weber, legal authority is the only basis for the functioning of enterprises, and authority is not only related to the position held in the enterprise. John French and Bertrand Raven distinguish as many as five sources or basics of power.

The rewarding authority results from the fact that one person is entitled to reward others for performing specific tasks or parts of them. The power of coercion (coercion) is the reverse of the rewarding power and consists in punishment for a lack of discipline and subordination (Koźmiński, Piotrowski, 2005).

The essence of formal authority is the definition of tasks and goals for subordinates by the leader. The one to whom a given duty is directed must submit to it. The reference authority assumes that the leader has a certain charisma, and people take it with esteem, identify with him, he is the source for them, from which they want to draw.

On the other hand, expert power is used when people are convinced that the leader has some special knowledge that they lack.

The features of effective use of power are described by John P. Kotter. He points out that leaders who effectively use power remember the sources of their authority, know the costs, threats and benefits of the five foundations of power, appreciate the advantages of all the foundations of power, have career goals, act maturely and control their behaviour and understand that the task of authority is to achieve goals (Koźmiński, Piotrowski, 2005).

In turn, R.E. Queen is of the opinion that effective leaders reach the peak of their leadership capabilities when they refer to their greatest values and the finest instincts (Queen, 2005).

Leadership is associated with having authority over subordinates. W. Bańka thinks that if a leader is at the head of the task force (Bańka, 1999):

1. he convinced people to complete the mission of the enterprise,
2. he has conducted organisational changes without conflict,
3. he was able to rotate employees within the group without their objection,
4. in the group, there was an atmosphere conducive to the implementation of the strategy,
5. there was no group of interpersonal conflicts.

J. Oswald Sanders indicates that leadership skills are possessed by people who do not give in to addictions, are able to control themselves, think independently, are creative and cultivate positive relationships with their subordinates (Sanders, 1991).

The leader should be the authority for subordinates, i.e., arouse recognition for his character, knowledge and skills. The essence of authority is the fact that people highly evaluate someone and prepare in advance for obedience to that person. They follow his orders and always believe in his judgments. Trust, as a component of authority, wins the leader in the long-term process of his activity. It is said that the leaders who gain authority (Bańka, 1999):

- are friendly and communicative,
- treat people subjectively,
- make decisions that arise from conversations with employees,
- take responsibility for the consequences of the decision,

- are objective,
- can appreciate the contribution of work.

The authority in the employee group fulfils several functions (Bańka, 1999):

1. motivational – it stimulates to action;
2. psychological – it triggers activity;
3. praxeological – serves as a model for the professional self-fulfilment of employees.

There are several types of authority (Bańka, 1999):

- formal authority – related to the position held. To a large extent, it is associated with recognition for external sources of the position;
- moral authority – the world of values of the leader is highly appreciated;
- professional authority – based on the knowledge and skills of the leader;
- personal authority – a combination of all three types of authority.

Each of the above-mentioned types of authority is characterised by a different level of effectiveness. The factors that increase the effectiveness of leadership primarily include the personality of the leader (especially: decisiveness, consistency, communicativeness, prosociality), his style of managing people, the overall culture of the organisation, as well as the individual expectations of those subjected to the process of leadership.

The problem of modern enterprises is often that management deals with the organisation of work and too little leadership. In many companies, emphasis is placed on overseeing the course of executing certain commands, and nobody wonders whether or not they should be issued at all. The experience of many enterprises allows us to think that people should be led more, because then it is not only required, but it is also said what is good and what will give certain results.

Leadership is an element of human resources management in strategic terms. Leadership in strategic management deals with triggering human productivity. It allows you to make changes in the functioning of an enterprise which are based on the changing environment of the company. By implementing the personnel function, it becomes an element of the company's strategy. It also leads to a state in which human capital can work more effectively for a given enterprise. The analysis of events taking place in the history of humanity leads to the recognition that since the beginning of time in human groups, and later more formal organisations, the role of the leader has been present. In the social environment, therefore, leadership is something natural. It was visible both in the times of primitive people, the ancient culture of Rome, the Middle Ages and in modern times. Nothing, it is strange, that this issue is perceived as important by historians, sociologists, management theoreticians, social psychologists and pedagogues. Each of these disciplines looks at leadership from a slightly different perspective and operates with different approaches, but in order to get a look at leadership that is as complete as possible, its characteristics should be drawn from many areas of science.

When speaking of leadership in the aspect of traits, one should pay attention to the fact that someone has leadership qualities. In simple terms, in practice, this means that it is a person with certain qualities that are considered to be more frequent among leaders (Bogdanienko, 2002). Scientists do not agree as to what features are most often mentioned; however: self-confidence, high self-esteem, higher than average intelligence, analytical and other abilities.

One can also talk about leadership by paying attention to the effects brought about by a given individual. An example is an "effective but tormenting leader" – a person who realises the goals set before him, even if it means that employees may feel bad in the team (Bogdanienko, 2002).

We can also look at leadership in a slightly wider social perspective. This image presents the relationship of the leader with the environment, its impact on the workplace climate and the effects that this entails (Bogdanienko, 2002).

In summary, leadership can be understood as a trait (someone is a leader because people obey him, want to listen to him and follow him), as a leadership process (the person of X leads in a non-conflictual way, i.e. he tries to lead through persuasion for the implementation of important tasks), the effects of action (good leadership is where goals are achieved and team members are satisfied), as well as looking from a sociological perspective (e.g. how our – as members of the group, school or company – perception of reality is influenced by the leader's views).

Analysing the biographies of outstanding historical leaders, such as the biographies of Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, or other great leaders, we note that it is easy to see many significant differences between these figures which result not only from the differences in historical periods in which they lived. The variety of cultural conditions, historical periods in which various managers operate, the scope of their power – all this makes it extremely difficult to speak of leadership in terms of features.

It should be emphasised that speaking about leadership should not only be limited to great leaders, heads of state or outstanding figures entailing entire societies, such as Mahatma Gandhi. Social psychology equally looks at leadership through the prism of a small group, be it colleagues in the yard, or a school class, or a system of roles in a company or organisation.

A look at leadership through the prism of the "great leaders" is connected with the classic works of the eminent German sociologist Max Weber (Weber, 1968). This author dealt with leadership from the perspective of power, i.e. mainly in the way in which different societies are authorised to take over leadership, embrace governments, etc. He has distinguished three ways of legitimising (legitimizing) power:

- through tradition (where, for example, the son takes over the throne of his father),
- by law (where the transfer of power takes place under the law),
- through the charisma of the leader (when he kidnaps people).

To Max Weber, we owe the dissemination of the concept of "charisma" or "charismatic leader" (Weber, 1976). The term has come into colloquial language, has become a natural

concept and seems understandable without being defined. Max Weber understood charisma as a special property of an outstanding individual, equipped with the opinion of its supporters in natural or at least exceptional leadership ability. Nowadays, we can talk about charismatic rock vocalists, or even charismatic lecturers. In Weber's understanding, it was almost magical, as with great prophets like Muhammad or Buddha, as well as great historical heroes.

Following the successes of great leaders in guiding people over the course of history, three decisive principles can be observed, which are also important today for effective leadership (Altman, 1997):

- firstly – the boundaries of personality are the limits of leadership and motivational abilities, which is why it is very important to emphasise the personality of the leader;
- secondly – every person who has been properly managed wants to reach the top of his abilities and exceed them.
- thirdly – the top achievements do not reveal themselves to the employees themselves. They have to come to fruition with the conscious participation of the leader, both thanks to his patience and dignity.

Currently, the use of the term "leader" has sometimes been excessively broadened, basically including every person in an organisation who has the authority and authority. Real leadership can only be properly defined in a social context. The proper definition of a leader may be one that says that he or she has followers (Hersey, Johnson, 1988). From a psychological point of view, leaders lead, because they can convince people that they better understand the problems facing them than others. People agree to their leadership, because they are able to talk about proposed solutions with conviction, showing confidence when others have doubts and take decisive action. Leadership differs from other relationships in that leaders give their followers hope and faith. They are people who, according to others, can do everything change for the better. In the emotional sphere, leaders gain their supporters because certain characteristics (Bogdanienko, 2002) appear with them:

- trust in a place of horror,
- certainty in a place of uncertainty,
- acting in a place of indecision,
- strength instead of weakness,
- knowledge in a place of ignorance,
- courage instead of cowardice,
- optimism instead of cynicism,
- belief that the future will be better.

Thus, a leader leads because he can awaken in others the desire to pursue his chosen strategy and the desire for success and faith in success. "Leadership is a way to gain emotional acceptance and approval for the decision makers' intentions or decisions they have made from large social groups. Of course, you can also try to obtain this acceptance by referring to

convincing people with logical arguments and bills. However, this is often difficult, because bills do not always justify the decision, and sometimes they are too complicated for everyone to understand. An emotional impact on people, and especially on large groups, is often much more effective than purely intellectual influence" (Bolesta-Kukułka, 2000). "According to this group of views, leadership is not the domain of the intellect or cognition, but it is the domain of feelings" (Hesselbein, Goldsmith, Bechard, 1997).

"Leading is generally understood as a process of guiding, carried out without the abuse of traditional motivational tools requiring managers, by creating the right atmosphere, facilitate the subordinates' full use of their abilities" (Stoner, Wankel, 1994).

Literature clearly distinguishes the concept of management from leadership. Peter F. Drucker says: "the organisation's task is to lead people, not direct them" (Drucker, 2000). Some views show that "leadership is focused on taking the right action; management focuses on taking action in the right way. Leadership guarantees us that the ladders on which we are based are for the right walls; management guarantees us that climbing takes place in the most effective way" (Hesselbein, Goldsmith, Bechard, 1997). However, this is not a proper distinction, because "where to place ladders" can be treated as a strategic decision that falls within the scope of traditional management and has little in common with the motivation itself.

According to R.W. Griffin, leadership understood as a process is "the use of non-coercive influence to shape the goals of the group or organisation, motivating behaviours aimed at achieving these goals and helping to define the culture of the group or organisation" (Griffin, 1996).

Apprentices of the subject agree, however, that despite many years of research, there are difficulties in defining the essence of leadership.

Warren Bennis states that "leadership is still the most-studied one and the least understood issue among all social sciences. It is similar with beauty or love that we meet when we see it, and which is not easy to define or create at will. Literature on leadership is full of stories and heroes that can be the fruit of our fantasy" (Bennis, Handy, 1998). J.C. Maxwell, writing that he knows over 50 definitions of leadership, tries to make the following distinction:

- skilful execution of work is the domain of a worker,
- demonstration of the way of work is the domain of the teacher,
- supervising the work of others is the domain of the manager,
- inspiring others to better work is the domain of the leader (Maxwell, 1995).

However, aware of the deficiencies of this distinction, because the manager's task is also to inspire employees to work, he concludes: "Everyone talks about leadership; few understand what it is about. Most people want to lead; few are able to" (Maxwell, 1995).

Referring to leadership in social terms, it should be emphasised that some practical ways of seeking symbolic exchanges between people are based on basic behaviours, especially on relations between people (Załoga, 2013). The interpersonal relationships taking place in modern

society are transferred by symbols. If we understand the basics of the communication process, we can use these basics to illustrate the future course of leadership.

2. Characteristics of respondents

Research in the aspect of playing the role of social competences in the professional career of the commanding staff of junior officers of the Land Forces of the Polish Armed Forces was carried out in the organisational units of the Land Forces of the Polish Armed Forces. In choosing the research sample for the survey, it was assumed that it should be representative and include junior officers, i.e. lieutenants, lieutenants and captains who occupy command posts. A deliberate selection of a research sample was made, focusing on its representativeness for the population of the commanding staff of junior officers of the Land Forces in Polish Armed Forces. 908 correctly completed questionnaires were acquired during fieldwork. The survey was conducted among officers holding command positions at the tactical level. The tests included platoon commanders, company commanders and battery commanders. A survey in the form of a questionnaire was used by respondents to anonymously and independently fulfil. The quoted research area allowed us to obtain reliable results and guaranteed maintaining the research at a given level. The conducted empirical research consisted of examining the courts and opinions of the commanding staff of officers of the junior Land Forces of the Polish Armed Forces on the subject of the participation of social competences in the professional career of officers, including in the area of leadership. Conducting research, a large diversity of the research sample of the commanding staff of junior officers was obtained due to the various official positions occupied by respondents and officers' rankings.

Determination of the size of the research sample was conditioned both by the size of the studied population, as well as by the desire to obtain reliable and precise results.

Aiming to obtain the most reliable research results, the minimum size of the research sample was adopted at a level of 306 respondents. The study was attended by 52 women, which is 5.7% of respondents, and 856 men, which accounts for 94.3% of respondents, which significantly exceeds the assumed minimum of respondents.

Data analysis was performed in terms of the respondents' characteristics due to the length of the vocational training and the rank in the officers' corps. The largest group of 272 people was represented by officers with professional experience from 6 to 10 years. This group constitutes a 30% share in the surveyed population. In this group, there were 160 second lieutenants (17.6%), 60 lieutenants (6.6%) and 52 captains (5.7%). The second group consisted of 260 respondents, which accounted for 28.6% of the share in the surveyed sample, and who declared professional internship up to 16 to 20 years. In this group, there were 208 captains,

constituting 22.9% of the participation in the study group, and 52 lieutenants, forming 5.7% in the group of respondents. Another group of 164, constituting 18.1% of respondents in the surveyed group, was represented by respondents declaring their work experience up to 5 years. The group represented 112 officers in the corps of second lieutenants, constituting 12.3% of the group's share, and 52 officers in the lieutenants' body, which accounted for 5.7% of the research project. The group of officers declaring professional experience from 26 to 30 years represented 96 officers in the captains' corps, which constituted 10.6% of the research project. Officers declaring professional experience from 26 to 30 years represented the captains' corps, which was 10.6% of the share in the study group. Work experience from 11 to 15 years was declared by 64 officers in the corps of second lieutenants, constituting 7% of the surveyed population. The last group was represented by 52 officers in the captains' corps, constituting 5.7% of the research project, at the same time declaring professional experience from 21 to 25 years.

In the further part of the dissertation, issues concerning analysis and identification of the level of social competence of the commanding staff of junior officers of the Land Forces of the Polish Armed Forces were presented. Here were indicated the relationships between dependent variables and independent variables appearing in the career management process in the officers' corps.

3. The importance of leadership in the command post

For the needs of the research process of the level of the social competence profile of the command staff of the Land Forces of the Polish Armed Forces, indicators for measuring the level of leadership were selected. These included: building and implementing inspirational concepts, authority among subordinates, credibility, targeting the team to achieve goals, taking responsibility for the implementation of the group's assumed activities, leadership in crisis situations, enforcement of deadlines, ability to use different styles of people management, precise determination roles and opinions of other people and motivating subordinates to develop themselves (Ciekanowski, 2011).

As a result of the conducted questionnaire surveys among the officers of the junior commanders of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, a detailed analysis of data regarding the role and importance of social competences in the occupied position was made. It was established that respondents, regardless of their officer rank, occupational position, professional experience and gender, gave similar answers in their assessment. Using the Chi-square test, correlations were carried out between the independent variable occupied by the official position and the dependent variable, social competences, which allowed for a positive verification of the assumed hypothesis.

As a result of the evaluation, it can be concluded that there is a dependency between the dependent variable, social competencies and the independent variable, with the official position occupied by the officers. The correlations of social competences in relation to the position held testify to a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$). The statistical significance of each of the adopted social competences is less than 0.05, i.e. at a significance level $p = 0.001$. This authorises researchers to reject the null hypothesis, which assumes no dependencies between variables. This is synonymous with the adoption of an alternative hypothesis, which assumes that a relationship exists between the studied variables.

To confirm the occurrence of dependencies between variables, the test was performed using the Chi-square and Cramer's V test. The test confirmed that there is a relationship between the variables tested. For Cramer's V correlation coefficient for a dependent variable of social competence: leadership - the desired state (V Cramer 0.111), there is a weak correlation. On the other hand, for social competences: leadership - the current state (V Cramer 0.336), there is a moderate correlation.

As a result of the analysis of the distribution of variables, it was proved that the social competence of the leadership possessed by officers of the junior commanders of the Land Forces of the Polish Armed Forces is important in the occupied position in terms of ensuring military security.

Officers of the junior commanding staff of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland appearing in the role of the respondent in the research project as part of the dissertation recommended an average assessment of the level of possessed and expected social competences in the aspect of the occupied position. In the process of assessing their social competences, the respondents used the five-point Likert scale. Referring to social competences, among the twelve assessed by the respondents, the leadership obtained an assessment at a level of 3.77 - the present state, while the expected state - 4.60.

In the course of empirical research, information was gathered that confirmed the assumptions of the cited literature on the subject in the context of the identification of factors affecting the level of leadership in occupational posts occupied by soldiers. According to the research, the respondents declared that they assessed the importance of leadership competences in the occupational role as important.

As a result of empirical research carried out among officers of the junior commanders of Land Forces of the Polish Armed Forces after conducting a detailed analysis of data on the role and importance of social competence, leadership in the commanding position can clearly state that there is a dependency between the dependent variable and the independent position. The correlations of the adopted indicators defining the leadership in relation to the position held testify to a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$). Because statistical significance in each adopted competence index, the leadership is less than 0.05, i.e. at a significance level $p = 0.001$, then we can reject the null hypothesis, which assumes no dependence between variables. This is

synonymous with the adoption of an alternative hypothesis, which assumes that the relationship exists. The Chi-square test confirmed that there is a relationship between variables.

For Cramer's V correlation coefficient for the competency dependent variable leadership in relation to indicators: building and implementing inspirational concepts – desired state (V Cramer 0.220), authority in subordinates – desired state (V Cramer 0.265), reliability – desired condition (V Cramer 0.252), taking responsibility for the implementation of the group's assumed activities – desired state (V Cramer 0.220), conduction in crisis situations – desired state (V Cramer 0.213), enforcement of deadlines – current status (V Cramer 0.228), enforcement of deadlines – desired condition (V Cramer 0.239), ability to use different styles of people management – current status (V Cramer 0.261) and motivating subordinates to develop – desired state (V Cramer 0.214), there is a weak correlation. In turn, leadership competences with reference to indicators: building and implementing inspirational concepts – current status (V Cramer 0.438), authority in subordinates – current status (V Cramer 0.301), credibility – current status (V Cramer 0.401), team orientation to achieve the objectives – current state (V Cramer 0.366), targeting the team to achieve the set goals – desired state (V Cramer 0.325), assuming responsibility for the implementation of the assumed group activities – current status (V Cramer 0.323), conduction in crisis situations – current status (V Cramer 0.465), ability to use different styles of people management – desired condition (V Cramer 0.332), precise determination of roles and tasks of other people – current status (V Cramer 0.417) and motivating subordinates to develop themselves – current status V Cramer 0.337), there is a moderate correlation. As to leadership competence in relation to the indicator, precise determination of roles and tasks of other people – the desired state (V Cramer 0.536), there is a strong correlation.

The conducted analysis of the variable distribution revealed that the competence of leadership is important from the point of view of the occupied position by the officers of the junior commanders of the Land Forces of the Polish Armed Forces in the aspect of the tasks performed to ensure security.

Respondents in the survey using the five-point Likert scale assessed the level of competences held in relation to their occupational position. The recommended rating referred to the current status and expected state.

Referring to the selected components of leadership presented in Chart 1, among the ten presented with the highest-assessed component of competence, leadership in relation to the current state is credibility (3.97). Other components of leadership competence are leadership in crisis situations (3.95), enforcement deadlines (3.88) and assuming responsibility for the implementation of the group's assumed activities (3.87). In turn, the lowest rated components in the leadership are building and implementing inspiring concepts (3.31), precisely defining roles and tasks of other people (3.49) and the ability to use different styles of people management (3.72). The presented analysis of the results allows one to indicate the level of competences of officers of the younger commanding staff of the Land Forces of the Polish

Armed Forces in relation to the current status and the expected state recommended by the respondents. The expected level of competence held by officers of junior commanders with regard to the recommended assessment of leadership indicators ranged from 4.52 to 4.89. The level of competence of leadership of officers of the junior commanding staff is presented in figure 1.

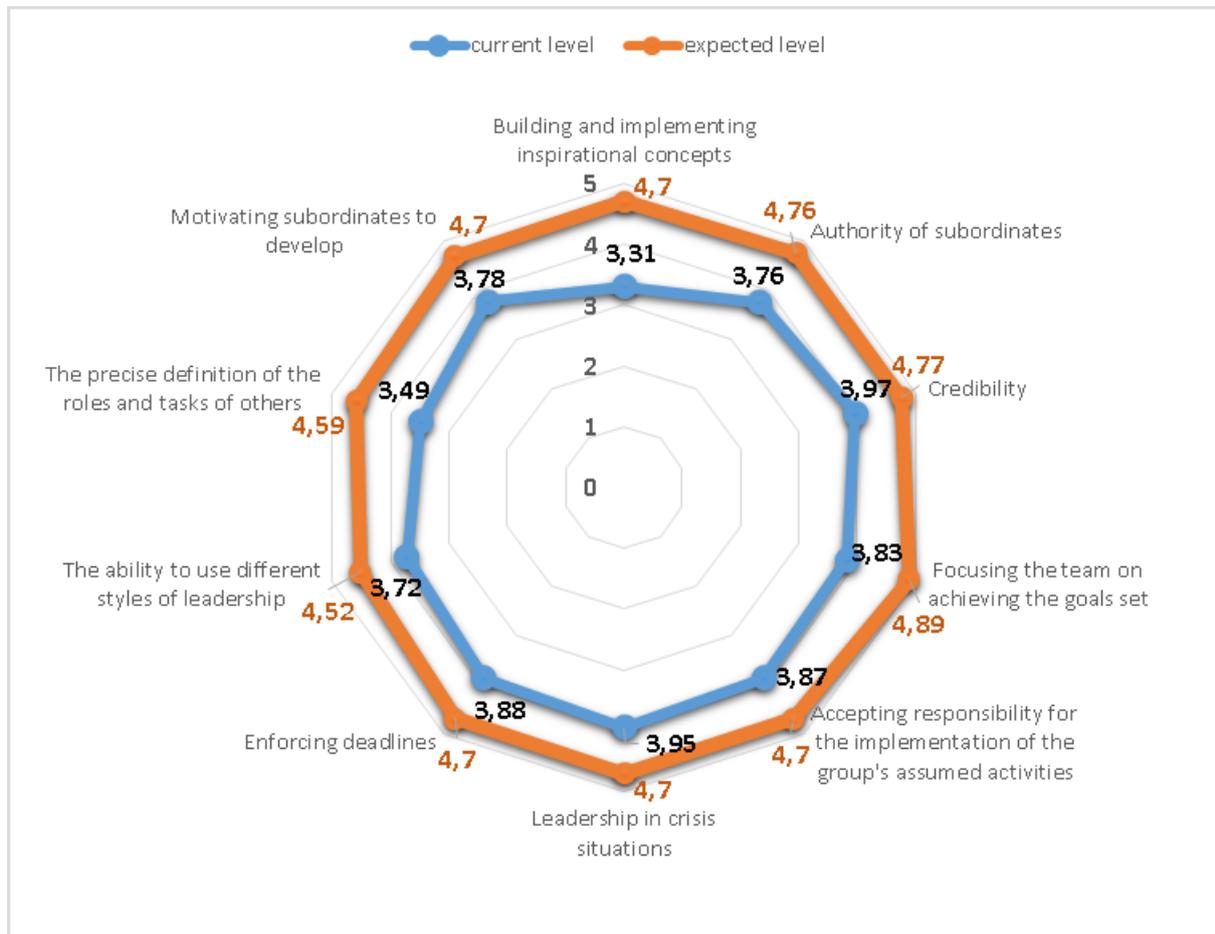


Figure 1. The importance of leadership competences in the occupied position. Source: own study based on the conducted research.

Competence gap related to social competence The leadership of officers illustrated in figure 1 is visible in each component of the leadership competence model. However, the biggest discrepancy concerns the building indicator and the implementation of inspiring concepts. As mentioned earlier, in the opinion of respondents, leadership is treated in this research project as a priority and, thus, is considered one of the most important competences in the performance of official tasks as a commander. In the respondents' opinion, the average assessment of their current level of skills in building and implementing inspirational concepts is at the level of the average mark of 3.31. In turn, the respondents' expectations regarding leadership skills in command positions with respect to the selected indicators are on a scale of 1 to 5 at the average rating from 4.52 to 4.89. The highest expectations of respondents, as to the level of expected competence, the leadership by officers of junior commanders in relation to the recommended

assessment of selected leadership indicators refers to the orientation of the team for the achievement of the assumed goals, assessed at the average level of 4.89.

Summary

As a result of the conducted research, it is undoubtedly necessary to conclude that the commanders of the officers of the younger Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland have the ability to lead and, thus, to influence people. This requires specific knowledge and specific skills resulting from having social competences that translate into the success of the armed forces. The commanding staff enjoys authority in the environment in which they pursue their professional career. They represent an environment that has a significant impact on the social environment. In the milieu of armed forces, people and their knowledge are valued among the commanding staff.

Summing up, it should be stated that the analysis of the research process showed the importance of the presented problem. Leadership is a very important managerial influence when working with people in any organisation. As a result of the conducted research, the authors of this publication recognise and appreciate the leadership skills of the commanding staff of the Polish Armed Forces. This allows us to believe that the level of qualifications of candidates for professional soldiers is at a high level. In addition, respondents unequivocally stated that tasks in command positions require commanders to have an appropriate level of leadership skills. Furthermore, the human resources policy in the armed forces assumes that the commanders have and constantly expand knowledge in the field of management. Nevertheless, in the opinion of respondents, the importance of social competence leadership on the occupied position is unsatisfactory. The result of such perception of the problem by the respondents is the existing competence gap. The existence of a competency gap in the use of social competence leadership on the occupied position allows one to think that competence is not fully used in the occupied position, which was confirmed in the research process. This in turn allows one to think that the competence of leadership does not have a significant impact in the process of, for example, promotion of officers, and thus does not significantly affect the rate and direction of the professional career of officers of the Polish Armed Forces.

The authors of this publication presented contents regarding the importance of the role of leadership in the professional career of the commanding staff of officers of the Polish Armed Forces in the aspect of command positions and thus with regard to official opinions aimed at ensuring military security. The presented subject matter in this publication is a continuation of a series of articles on "Social competence of the commanding staff of Polish Armed Forces in the military security system of Poland" and "The role of the professional environment in shaping social competences".

This publication is a contribution to the presentation of further research carried out in the context of the quoted articles and this publication, which relate to the level of social competence of the commanding staff of junior officers of the Polish Armed Forces. The authors of this article are aware that the presented study is not an exhaustive description of the complexity of the phenomenon of social competence. Therefore, it is justified to continue exploring the subject matter and to publish it in subsequent cyclical publications.

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